General Assembly

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Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2013

[*on the report of the Second Committee (A/68/438/Add.8)*]

68/216. Harmony with Nature

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development,[1] Agenda 21,[2] the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21,[3] the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development[4] and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation),[5]

Recalling its resolutions 64/196 of 21 December 2009, 65/164 of 20 December 2010, 66/204 of 22 December 2011 and 67/214 of 21 December 2012 on Harmony with Nature and its resolution 63/278 of 22 April 2009, by which it designated 22 April as International Mother Earth Day,

Recalling also the 1982 World Charter for Nature,[6]

Noting the interactive dialogue of the General Assembly on Harmony with Nature, held on 22 April 2013, to commemorate International Mother Earth Day by discussing different economic approaches, in the context of sustainable development, to further a more ethical basis for the relationship between humanity and the Earth,

Noting also the first Peoples' World Conference on Climate Change and the Rights of Mother Earth, hosted by the Plurinational State of Bolivia in Cochabamba from 20 to 22 April 2010,[7]

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[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[2] Ibid., annex II.

[3] Resolution S-19/2, annex.

[4] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 1, annex.

[5] Ibid., resolution 2, annex.

[6] Resolution 37/7, annex.

[7] A/64/777, annexes I and II.

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Recognizing that a number of countries consider Mother Earth the source of all life and nourishment, and that these countries consider Mother Earth and humankind an indivisible, living community of interrelated and interdependent beings,

Recalling the outcome document of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, from 20 to 22 June 2012, entitled "The future we want",[8]

Expressing concern about documented environmental degradation, potentially more frequent and intense natural disasters and the negative impact on nature resulting from human activity, and recognizing the need to strengthen scientific knowledge on the effects of human activities on the Earth ecosystems, with the aim of promoting and ensuring an equitable, balanced and sustainable relationship with the Earth,

Recognizing that gross domestic product was not designed as an indicator for measuring environmental degradation resulting from human activity and the need to overcome this limitation with regard to sustainable development and the work carried out in this regard,

Recognizing also the uneven availability of basic statistical data under the three dimensions of sustainable development and the need to improve their quality and quantity,

Reaffirming that fundamental changes in the way societies produce and consume are indispensable for achieving global sustainable development and that all countries should promote sustainable consumption and production patterns, with the developed countries taking the lead and with all countries benefiting from the process, taking into account the Rio principles,

Recognizing that many ancient civilizations, indigenous peoples and indigenous cultures have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between human beings and nature that fosters a mutually beneficial relationship,

Recognizing also the work undertaken by civil society, academia and scientists in regard to signalling the precariousness of life on Earth, as well as their efforts, along with those of Governments and private sector organizations, to devise more sustainable models and methods for production and consumption,

Considering that sustainable development is a holistic concept that requires the strengthening of interdisciplinary linkages in the different branches of knowledge,

1. *Takes note* of the fourth report of the Secretary-General on Harmony with Nature;[9]

2. *Invites* Member States to consider existing studies and reports on Harmony with Nature, including the follow-up to the discussions at the interactive dialogues of the General Assembly, such as the dialogue held on 22 April 2013 on different economic approaches, in the context of sustainable development, in order to further a more ethical basis of the relationship between humanity and the Earth, and to promote further studies on this subject;

[8] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[9] A/68/325 and Corr.1.

3. *Requests* the President of the General Assembly to hold a regular, inclusive and interactive dialogue, at the sixty-eighth session of the Assembly, to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 22 April 2014, with the participation of Member States, United Nations organizations, independent experts and other stakeholders, to advance discussions on Harmony with Nature in order to promote a balanced integration of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development;

4. *Encourages* giving appropriate consideration to the issue of Harmony with Nature in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda;

5. *Recalls* its resolutions requesting the Secretary-General to establish a trust fund for the participation of independent experts in the interactive dialogue to be held at the plenary meetings to be convened during the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day, and in this regard invites Member States and other relevant stakeholders to consider contributing to this trust fund once it is established;

6. *Also recalls* the launching of the Harmony with Nature website on the occasion of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development by the secretariat of the Conference and the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the Secretariat, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to make use of the existing website maintained by the Division by gathering information and contributions on ideas and activities to promote a holistic approach to sustainable development in harmony with nature being undertaken to advance the integration of scientific interdisciplinary work, including success stories on the use of traditional knowledge and on existing national legislation;

7. *Recognizes* that planet Earth and its ecosystems are our home and that "Mother Earth" is a common expression in a number of countries and regions, and that some countries recognize the rights of nature in the context of the promotion of sustainable development and are convinced that, in order to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations, it is necessary to promote harmony with nature;

8. *Calls for* holistic and integrated approaches to sustainable development that will guide humanity to live in harmony with nature and lead to efforts to restore the health and integrity of the Earth's ecosystems;

9. *Invites* States:

(a) To further build up a knowledge network in order to advance a holistic conceptualization to identify different economic approaches that reflect the drivers and values of living in harmony with nature, relying on current scientific information to achieve sustainable development, and to facilitate the support and recognition of the fundamental interconnections between humanity and nature;

(b) To promote harmony with the Earth, as found in indigenous cultures, and learn from them, and to provide support for and promote efforts being made from the national level down to the local community level to reflect the protection of nature;

10. *Encourages* all countries and the relevant bodies of the United Nations system to develop and strengthen the quality and quantity of basic statistical data on the three dimensions of sustainable development, and invites the international

community and the pertinent bodies of the United Nations system to assist the efforts of developing countries by providing capacity-building and technical support;

11. *Recognizes* the need for broader measures of progress to complement gross domestic product in order to better inform policy decisions, and in this regard welcomes the launching by the Statistical Commission of a work programme to develop broader measures of progress,[10] which, based on a stocktaking exercise of current national, regional and international practices to measure progress, will conduct a technical review of existing efforts in this area, with a view to identifying best practices, and to facilitating the sharing of knowledge, especially for the benefit of developing countries;

12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-ninth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution;

13. *Decides* to continue the consideration of the sub-item entitled "Harmony with Nature" at its sixty-ninth session under the item entitled "Sustainable development".

71st plenary meeting
20 December 2013

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[10] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2013, Supplement No. 4* (E/2013/24), chap. I, sect. C, decision 44/114.